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# PREPARATIONS FOR THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN: ACTION FOR EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

## Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Commission on the Status of Women is the preparatory body for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, to be held in 1995. The Commission at its thirty-fifth session adopted resolution 35/4, in which it requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its thirty-sixth session a draft report to serve as a working document for the elaboration of the programme of action that would be considered by the Fourth World Conference. The resolution also requested the Secretary-General to report to the Commission, at its thirty-sixth session, on the contribution of the bodies, regional commissions, specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, as well as the non-governmental agencies concerned, to the preparations for the Fourth World Conference. The present report suggests the preparatory activities that might be organized at national, regional and interregional levels. It discusses the role of non-governmental organizations in the preparations for the Fourth World Conference, as well as the type of public information campaigns that would be desirable. It indicates the amount of resources currently allocated for the Fourth World Conference, based on the assumption that it should be at the lowest possible cost, and the types of additional requirements that might be considered should Governments wish to prepare for the Fourth World Conference on the basis of alternative assumptions.

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## INTRODUCTION

1. Acting as the preparatory body for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, the Commission on the Status of Women, in its resolution 35/4, decided to prepare for consideration by the Fourth World Conference a programme of action comprising a limited number of issues that had been identified as representing a fundamental obstacle to the advancement of the majority of women. It requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its thirty-sixth session a draft report to serve as a working document for the elaboration of such a programme of action. In that resolution, it also requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its thirty-sixth session on the contribution to the preparations for the Fourth World Conference by the bodies, regional commissions, specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, as well as the non-governmental agencies concerned. Furthermore, by its resolution 1990/9, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its thirty-sixth session information on the data that will be used in the formulation of the second report on progress made in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, 1/ as well as an outline of the second report.

2. The present report, which is submitted in accordance with those resolutions, outlines preparations that have already been undertaken as well as action required by the Commission at its present session. In view of the importance of coordination between organizations of the United Nations system to the preparatory process, a special informal inter-agency consultation was organized in December 1991 to discuss substantive preparations for the Fourth World Conference. The results of those discussions are reflected in the present report.

## I. SUBSTANTIVE PREPARATIONS

3. Since the first three world conferences on women, new problems have emerged in the world, as well as new opportunities for progress. There are new alternatives to traditional strategies of development. Issues related to changing lifestyles for women, processes of democratization and the transition to market economies have particular effects on women, some positive and others negative, and provide new opportunities for women to participate. The growth of poverty in the world and its increasing feminization, with disproportionate consequences for the women who bear the weight of responsibility for coping with daily problems of subsistence, is another issue. The decline in development registered in Africa, the increasing understanding of the need to deal specifically with the girl child, especially when she is affected by cultural practices that devalue her, are manifestations of broader issues. In all of these, building on women's current roles and capacities by investing in women themselves and organizing them to obtain more political or economic power, is part of the solution to many world problems. Women can be determinative parts of the process of change by entering into democratized politics or into the market as entrepreneurs or by their work in the household being given due value. The focus of the Fourth World Conference should be on that process, and the partnership and responsibilities it entails, as well as on the rights of women. It should provide an opportunity to renew leadership for the advancement of women by bringing together the diverse entities that have struggled for equality in the past and those that will also do so in the future. The preparations at the national, regional and international levels

should lead to a convergence of views on the major issues affecting women worldwide that can be expressed in terms that can be followed by all who seek the common objectives of equality, development and peace.

4. The formal purpose of the Fourth World Conference is to review and appraise the advancement of women since 1985 in terms of the objectives of the Forward-looking Strategies and to mobilize women and men at both the policy-making and grass-roots levels to achieve those objectives. The preparatory activities should promote appraisal and mobilization at the national level and thereby constitute an integral part of the objectives of the Fourth World Conference itself, which will bring the advancement of women into international focus.

5. Taking into account all developments since International Women's Year (1975), particularly the recognition of obstacles to the advancement of women, the focus of the Fourth World Conference, to be held in 1995, should be forward-looking and concentrate on effective action to achieve specific objectives. The assessment made by the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, held at Nairobi in 1985, and the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies to the year 2000 (E/CN.6/1990/5), conducted in 1990, continue to be valid but need to be adjusted in the light of the changes in the world that have occurred over the past few years.

6. The implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies has been retarded at all levels - national, regional and international - by many factors. One of those has been a tendency, over the past two decades, to see the advancement of women as detached from other fundamental issues. All preparatory activities, as well as the Fourth World Conference itself, should therefore focus on questions that, while being of special concern to women, are relevant to the development of society and the world generally. They should aim at reaching out to men as well as women. According to decisions incorporated in resolution 35/4, the final document (programme of action) of the Fourth World Conference should comprise a limited number of issues and provide concise, action-oriented guidelines to accelerate the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies. Preparatory activities at the national, regional and international levels should, therefore, be planned with that focus in mind. While set out separately in the present report for the sake of clarity, activities at the national, regional and international levels should be considered as interrelated and mutually reinforcing.

## A. Preparatory activities at different levels

7. Preparatory activities should promote the Fourth World Conference and accelerate the process of the advancement of women by permitting them to achieve equal partnership with men in all aspects of society. For that reason, the issue should be included in the agendas of all relevant meetings at the national, regional and international levels leading up to the Fourth World Conference. Rather than being seen in isolation, women's concerns should be considered as part of all discussions on political, economic and social issues. The preparatory process for the Fourth World Conference should permit women to become involved in all activities related to the present and future improvement of society of which they should be full members. The preparatory process should encourage men to realize that women's advancement is a prerequisite to the achievement of societies where human rights are universally applied.

## 1. National level

8. Preparatory activities at the national level should be seen as an opportunity for focussing national attention on the issue of the status and advancement of women, for national machinery to assess the situation and mobilize national non-governmental organizations and individuals with a view to improving national performance in the advancement of women. It is important that non-governmental groups and grass-roots women are included in national preparations. In order to ensure this, and in view of the limited resources available to most national machinery, the Commission might consider recommending the establishment of national committees to serve as catalysts for the preparations by initiating, organizing and coordinating national activities relating to the Fourth World Conference. Optimally, such committees should be composed of officials of the national machinery, sectoral experts, academics, community activists, as well as women who have been involved with the previous world conferences on women.

9. One activity could be national appraisal meetings that would bring together officials of the national machinery, non-governmental organizations and special interest groups, experts, scientists, sectoral officials as well as observers for other countries and from international organizations where possible. The results of these meetings could constitute the basis of national reports. Such meetings to assess the effort and success of actions taken for the advancement of women at the national level would improve the exchange of expertise and build up an accumulated stock of knowledge and, more importantly, enable women to participate in the evaluation of progress made. It would be important for them to be linked to regional-level activities and for staff of organizations of the United Nations system and representatives of bilateral and multilateral assistance organizations and international non-governmental organizations to participate as observers. The meetings should be timed, as far as possible, to allow the results to be fed into the regional preparatory meetings.

10. National reports prepared for the Fourth World Conference will be intended primarily as a basis for future national action rather than as formal input to the review and appraisal, as in the past. They should consist of governmental contributions, at the local and national levels, as well as non-governmental contributions, and should be the result of a common effort. National machinery and non-governmental organizations should each assess their own progress and evaluate the obstacles. This appraisal process should involve a dialogue within the country; it should be self-critical and aim at achieving certain objectives within the country. It should identify where policy implementation has been successful and where renewed effort is particularly needed to eliminate the immediate obstacles. Each country has its specific experiences and, in the context of socio-economic and political change, its own priorities. It would be important for each country to identify the particular issues where investing in the advancement of women could help to achieve societal objectives. The possibility of the Fourth World Conference secretariat and other organizations of the United Nations system providing guidance to countries in the preparation of their national studies should be explored, if resources can be made available.

11. National appraisal can be most successful if it can be made on a credible, factual basis. Considerable progress has been made in collecting and disseminating statistical information disaggregated by gender. The use of this information in providing a factual basis for assessing progress was demonstrated during the first review and appraisal exercise. It is now accepted that

development policies, such as those intended to achieve economic growth, are not gender-neutral and that information and analysis are necessary to see the often subtle causes and effects of gender. New approaches have been initiated to analyse the important ways in which gender factors affect the success of policies and programmes. Countries should be assisted in applying new approaches through operational activities of the United Nations system; for example, programmes of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. The preparations for the Fourth World Conference should stimulate research and analysis that examine the contribution of women to development and the adverse effects of not recognizing that contribution. One operational aspect of preparations could be the further development and implementation of gender-analysis training, the building of statistical competence and the production of reports with statistics and analysis at the national level, which would facilitate the appraisal process. Similarly, networking among specialists working in the women-in-development (WID) field should be supported, including the establishment of communications support programmes.

12. A major effort should be to raise public consciousness about the importance for society of modifying gender relations and promoting the advancement of women. Special events, such as poster competitions, festivals, concerts, exhibitions and fairs, which demonstrate women's full contribution to society would draw attention to the Fourth World Conference and could be used to raise money for funding the participation of grass-roots women at the Fourth World Conference and its ancillary events. A particular effort should be made to involve men in the process of review and appraisal, with a view to placing the process in a gender context. The organization of committees and groups that could comprise a "male lobby" for gender equality at all levels should be considered. It is important to ensure systematic reporting of such events in order to encourage others and to draw international attention to national efforts.

13. Many specialized agencies have field operations and community-level activities related to advancement of women and will need to coordinate these activities so as to be mutually reinforcing. At the inter-agency consultation they agreed to coordinate their activities at the national level between themselves through the offices of the resident representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Information on these activities should be communicated to the Fourth World Conference secretariat for centralized collation and further dissemination.

14. In view of the importance of all preparatory activities, efforts should be made to mobilize sufficient resources to ensure their success. To this end, developing countries, particularly least developed countries, could consider applying for bilateral as well as multilateral assistance for activities for the advancement of women related to the preparatory process. Similarly, bilateral donor countries should be encouraged to make funds available to supplement international efforts in the preparatory exercise. A coordinated approach is proposed so that as many countries as possible can benefit from such assistance. International non-governmental organizations should also be encouraged to consider how best to mobilize their national affiliates.

## 2. Regional level

15. Preparatory activities at the regional level should be designed to consolidate national experience and to identify common issues affecting countries in the region. Each regional commission is expected to hold a regional preparatory meeting prior to the Fourth World Conference. In order to assess key regional issues prior to the general preparatory meetings, it is suggested that the regional commissions should organize one or more technical meetings on those issues. They should elaborate innovative suggestions for future action in specific areas that could be considered by the regional conferences and, ultimately, by the Fourth World Conference.

16. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), at its next session, is expected to provide a mandate to its secretariat to hold the European regional preparatory meeting. An invitation to host the meeting has already been extended by the Government of Czechoslovakia. A meeting on statistics on women, to be held jointly by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and ECE, will take place in April 1992.

17. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in its resolution 46/6 of 13 June 1990, entitled "Integration of women in all aspects of development", called for a study on the progress made and obstacles encountered in the ESCAP region in implementing the Forward-looking Strategies and for a regional intergovernmental meeting on women in development to be convened in 1993 as a preparatory activity for the Fourth World Conference. At its forty-seventh session, in April 1991, ESCAP welcomed the offer of the Government of Indonesia to host the regional intergovernmental conference on WID, the proposed agenda for which is to be presented to a meeting of ESCAP at Beijing in April 1992. This regional preparatory meeting, to be held in 1994, is to be preceded by an ad hoc expert group meeting. Among the proposed regional projects related to the preparations for the Fourth World Conference during the present biennium are projects on legal literacy for women, improved incorporation of women's concerns in development planning, and strengthening of the Women's Information Network for Asia and the Pacific (WINAP). Such projects, however, are contingent on additional extrabudgetary funding.

18. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) holds conferences on the integration of WID every three years. The next one, which will be held in 1994, should serve as the preparatory meeting for the region. The Fifth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, held at Curaçao in September 1991, decided to accept the invitation of Argentina to hold the Sixth Regional Conference in that country. The agenda of the meeting will include the drafting of a new regional plan of action on the integration of women into the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean. It has been suggested that extending the duration of the Sixth Regional Conference could permit more comprehensive preparations to be made for the Fourth World Conference. This regional preparatory meeting is to be preceded by an expert group meeting in 1992, which will initiate the preparation of a new regional plan of action on the integration of women into development that is to update the regional plan of action that has been implemented since 1977. Meetings of presiding officers of the Regional Conference, consisting of representatives of eight States, are held twice a year to prepare for the next Regional Conference. At the regional level, some proposed projects include the design of policies to connect academic centres with Governments and non-governmental organizations, and the creation of a network for the Caribbean.

Another priority would be to link women's issues to the general regional priority theme of changing production patterns with social equity.

19. The Fifth Women's Conference to be organized by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), to be held in Senegal in 1994, will constitute the regional preparatory meeting for the Fourth World Conference. The agenda of the Conference will be presented to the Africa Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development and the ECA Conference of Ministers in April 1992. Follow-up activities to an ad hoc expert group meeting, which proposed the establishment of a Federation of African Women Entrepreneurs, are envisaged in 1992-1993 in the form of meetings, seminars and workshops, the reports of which will be consolidated to form part of the documentation for the regional conference. A paper consolidating case-studies on the external debt crisis and its relation to the implementation of global and regional strategies for the advancement of women in Africa will also be prepared and presented to the regional conference. The 1992/1993 work programme of ECA will focus on the improvement of the position of women for the control of production and distribution services through training seminars, meetings and country case-studies. Subregional committee meetings are being held in early 1992 to consider the progress made in the implementation of the Abuja Declaration on Participatory Development: The Role of Women in the 1990s, as well as a priority programme of activities in the context of both the Abuja Declaration and the Forward-looking Strategies in preparation for both the regional conference and the Fourth World Conference.

20. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has introduced two additional activities into its work in response to resolution 35/4 of the Commission on the Status of Women. The first is an assessment of the situation of Arab women and the identification of obstacles that obstruct their advancement, taking into consideration the Forward-looking Strategies and the Strategy for the Development of Arab Women in Western Asia to the Year 2000 (1984). This activity will constitute the background for the formulation in 1994 of a programme of action. The second is an assessment of the situation of Arab women returnees as a result of the Gulf War and its consequences. The objective of this activity is to give special attention to the hardships of women returnees and their families as they face loss of income as well as the disruption of their social support systems. This activity will also constitute the background for the formulation of a plan of action. ESCWA proposes to convene the preparatory meeting for the region jointly with the League of Arab States at a date and place yet to be determined.

21. Some regional priorities, which might be the subjects of the regional technical meetings mentioned in paragraph 15 above, are already emerging as follows:

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| Africa | Entrepreneurship |
| Asia and the Pacific | Legal literacy, development planning |
| Europe | Effects of restructuring economies and polities |
| Latin America and the Caribbean | Violence against women, political participation |

22. For preparations to be successful, the regional commissions must have sufficient resources at their disposal. In view of the importance attached to the Fourth World Conference, the Commission might wish to examine ways in which the regional commissions could be strengthened to cope effectively with priority additional activities such as specialized research, organization of regional technical meetings, and liaison with the Fourth World Conference secretariat, national machinery and regional non-governmental organizations.

### 3. International level

23. The Commission on the Status of Women will continue its pre-scheduled work programme and examine priority themes each year under the objectives of equality, development and peace. The priority themes for the next three years are as follows:

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|---|---|---|
| Equality | 1993 | Increased awareness by women of their rights, including legal literacy |
| | 1994 | Equal pay for work of equal value, including methodologies for measurement of pay inequities and work in the informal sector |
| | 1995 | Equality in economic decision-making |
| Development | 1993 | Women in extreme poverty: integration of women's concerns in national development planning |
| | 1994 | Women in urban areas, nutrition and health factors for women in development, including migration, drug consumption and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) |
| | 1995 | Promotion of literacy, education and training, including technological skills |
| Peace | 1993 | Women and the peace process |
| | 1994 | Measures to eradicate violence against women in the family and society |
| | 1995 | Women in international decision-making |

In its resolution 1987/24, the Economic and Social Council recommended the convening of expert group meetings for the preparation of work on these themes. Funding, covering the cost of approximately eight experts per meeting, is provided in the regular budget for only two such meetings per biennium. Funding for other meetings, as well as for a possible increase in the number of participants, must be met through extrabudgetary resources. All information acquired through meetings and their preparation will be used for the preparation of the Fourth World Conference, as will the results of work on priority themes that has already taken place.

24. The Seminar on the Integration of Women in Development, held at Vienna from 9 to 11 December 1991 as part of the preparations of the report on the priority theme "Development: integration of women in the process of development" (E/CN.6/1992/8), involved a wide-ranging discussion of the relationship between gender and development. The meeting outlined a new approach not only to the subject of WID, but also to the concept of development itself. This new approach needs to be worked out further and should be applied to the process of adjusting development strategies in a world whose institutions are currently undergoing transformation.

25. The regular ad hoc inter-agency meetings on women will continue to be the main vehicle for system-wide coordination. At the informal inter-agency consultations in December 1991, there was a consensus that the issue of the advancement of women and the Fourth World Conference should be incorporated into all relevant sectoral activities undertaken by the specialized agencies and other bodies of the system at all levels. In addition, there should be a coordinated approach to the substantive preparations for the Fourth World Conference; the Fourth World Conference secretariat would provide the focus for information exchange and follow-up.

26. In accordance with the proposal presented in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies to the year 2000 (A/46/439), the interregional consultation on women in public life, which was to be held at Vienna in 1991, should be rescheduled in the context of the preparatory process of the Fourth World Conference, subject to the availability of funds. The attainment of equality between women and men in the right to vote and to stand for political office has not been matched by progress in participation by women in decision-making at all levels, especially the highest. The absence of women from high-level decision-making means that women are still excluded from those processes of change and restructuring that will determine the future of the world's economy and social structure. It also means that decisions on the future are being made without the perspective that women draw from their own experience. For women to achieve real partnership, including the target of increasing the proportion of women in leadership positions to at least 30 per cent by 1995 (see Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15, annex, paragraph 7), they should be involved in the design of policies that are modifying political, economic and social structures. The interregional consultation could be a vehicle for this purpose and would be of value to the conclusions of the Fourth World Conference. It could also provide a women's perspective on wider issues of global governance and on the process of international restructuring currently under way, as well as ensuring that gender awareness is built into such a process from the beginning. It was suggested at the inter-agency consultation in December that, in the light of the evolving orientation of the interregional consultation, and subject to the availability of funds, a meeting of a group of eminent persons might be convened to explore this theme and to prepare material for consideration by the interregional consultation.

27. Following expressions of interest by Member States in rescheduling the interregional consultation, the General Assembly, in its resolution 46/98, noted the relevance of the interregional consultation to the preparation of the Fourth World Conference and requested that the Commission at its thirty-sixth session make recommendations for the convening of the interregional consultation not later than 1993.

28. The preparation of the next update to the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development 2/ is also to be seen as part of the preparatory process for the Fourth World Conference and will be available as a background document for it. Previous versions of the World Survey explored, in depth, critical economic issues in terms of the relationship between women and development. The General Assembly, in its resolution 46/98, requested the Secretary-General to continue updating the World Survey, placing emphasis on the adverse impact of the difficult economic situation on the majority of developing countries, in particular on the condition of women, and giving special attention to the worsening conditions for the incorporation of women into the labour force as well as to the impact of reduced expenditures for social services on women's opportunities for education, health and child care. A preliminary version of the updated World Survey is to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council in 1993 and the final version in 1994.

29. The value of gender-disaggregated statistics to the advancement of women has been demonstrated. The preparatory process should also be used to refine these statistics further and to develop new statistics where warranted. The preparatory process can provide an opportunity for the undertaking of exploratory micro-studies on which new statistical series are based and to examine special issues such as the measurement of the value of unremunerated work, including domestic work. The review and appraisal of the Forward-looking Strategies is expected ultimately to be based on the statistics available at the middle of the decade. Continuing joint activities led by the Statistical Office and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women could help provide better statistics.

30. The General Assembly, in its resolution 46/98, recommended the further development of methods of compilation and data collection in areas of concern identified by the Commission, with a view to preparing in all official languages as a background document for the Fourth World Conference, an updated edition of The World's Women 1970-1990: Trends and Statistics. 3/ The publication has been found to be an excellent vehicle for describing concisely and factually the situation of women. With coordination provided by the Statistical Office, the bodies that supported the original publication were the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) with contributions from the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, the International Labour Office (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). All these bodies are involved in system-wide planning of the update, including the identification of new information to be collected from new sources.

## B. Preparatory contributions for consideration at the Fourth World Conference

### 1. Information for the second review and appraisal

31. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/9, the 1995 second review and appraisal of the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies will be based on the analysis of the statistical data available rather than on questionnaires, which were found to be ineffective in describing

changes in the status of women. The preparatory process should be utilized to develop new and innovative approaches to statistics, to be ultimately reflected in the review and appraisal, which should compare women with men and show changes occurring over time. Many of these will be reflected in the updates of the World Survey and The World's Women. Sectoral appraisals will be contributed by the relevant specialized agencies on specific areas covered in the Forward-looking Strategies. The statistics that will be used will depend on the resources available in both the Fourth World Conference secretariat and the Statistical Office and on the substantive decisions taken by the Commission at its present session on the preparations for the Fourth World Conference. The secretariat will then be able to provide the Commission with information on the proposed data necessary for the second review and appraisal and with a tentative outline. Such information would be made available to the Commission, at its thirty-seventh session, as part of the report on the preparations for the Fourth World Conference.

## 2. Platform for action

32. Given that regional plans of action will reflect the specific priorities and needs of the regions, the final document of the Fourth World Conference, as called for by the Commission in its resolution 35/4, should be concise and action-oriented, concentrating on a few issues identified as representing a fundamental obstacle to the advancement of the majority of women in the world. It is suggested that this final document should be called a "Platform for action" in order to distinguish it from previous documents such as the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year (1975) and the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (1980) and to emphasize the fact that the document is intended to be a basis for mobilizing women and men to achieve already agreed objectives.

33. As the correlation and interdependence between equality, development and peace has become so pronounced, it is no longer feasible to treat them separately in terms of women's advancement. Issues like the participation of women in processes of democratization, for example, cut across all the objectives of the Nairobi World Conference, as do those concerning women's role in the market, or women and the environment. Platform for action should accommodate this interdependence.

34. As decided by the Commission in its resolution 35/4, the platform for action should include elements relating to awareness-raising, decision-making, literacy, poverty, health, violence, national machinery, refugees, and technology. The content of the platform was discussed at the inter-agency consultation, which recommended the inclusion of the following concepts:

(a) Society as a whole would gain through the full utilization of all available resources, including women; therefore society as a whole should work towards equality and the incorporation of women and women's issues into all bodies and topics;

(b) Women must take their full share of responsibility for the future, adapt to world changes, identify emerging issues and, at the same time, take a new look at old problems and translate existing mechanisms into action for emerging issues and change;

(c) The link must be made, through research, analysis and policy formulation, between micro- and macro-levels of shared responsibility at the political, civil and technical levels and new partnerships established;

(d) Emphasis must be given to the empowerment and participation of women on the basis of partnership in decision-making and policy implementation;

(e) Additional realistic targets, where possible, should be set for those subject areas where the achievement of objectives during the last five years of the decade is vital;

(f) The platform for action should be based also on an assessment of actions and progress during preparations for the Fourth World Conference.

### 3. Documentation

35. The basic substantive documentation for the Fourth World Conference should consist of the following items:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on the second review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women;

(b) Draft final document (Platform for action);

(c) Update of the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development;

(d) Update of The World's Women;

(e) Outcome of the interregional consultation on women in public life and of regional preparatory meetings for the Fourth World Conference;

(f) Updated compendium on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

## II. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

36. Recalling the importance of the extensive contribution of non-governmental organizations to the success of previous world conferences on women and to the implementation of the action plans adopted by them, the principle of close cooperation at all levels between the United Nations system, Governments and non-governmental organizations should be followed throughout the preparatory process, as well as during the Fourth World Conference itself and the parallel forum to be organized by non-governmental organizations. As in previous conferences, the host country should provide adequate facilities to the non-governmental organizations to enable them to carry out their planned activities. In order to reflect the results of the participation of non-governmental organizations in the national preparatory process, it is recommended that national delegations should include representatives of non-governmental organizations.

37. Contributions of non-governmental organizations to the preparatory process, especially at the national level, will be invaluable for awareness-raising and the organization of special events. Through their participation in national symposia, they will also be in a position to reinforce the national effort.

38. The international non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council held their preliminary consultation on preparations for activities related to the Fourth World Conference under the auspices of the three NGO Committees on Women (Geneva, New York, Vienna) prior to the thirty-fifth session of the Commission. Initial meetings of the "Planning Committee for NGO Activities in Relation to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women" resulted in agreement that a major emphasis would be on regional activities.

39. In order to ensure cooperation at the national and regional levels, national coalitions and regional networks will be further developed. These groups will then help to identify specific needs and thus assist in determining the international agenda. Initial steps have already been undertaken to develop a network for organizing regional forums of non-governmental organizations to coincide with the regional preparatory meetings held by the regional commissions.

40. Activities of non-governmental organizations will culminate in a forum to be held parallel to the Fourth World Conference, the duration and scheduling of which will determine the timing of the forum. While it would not be practical for it to be entirely simultaneous, some overlap would be desirable to allow for interaction between delegations. Based on past experience with earlier NGO forums, which were open to individuals, members of networks and autonomous groups, as well as government representatives and non-governmental organizations in consultative status, the community of non-governmental organizations has indicated that it hopes that the Commission, as preparatory body for the Fourth World Conference, will recommend the same degree of open access to, and participation in, the forum in 1995.

41. A further meeting of the Planning Committee will be held immediately before the thirty-sixth session of the Commission. Future meetings will coincide with the sessions of the Commission until 1995. Non-governmental organizations will report to the Commission on their preparations.

## III. INFORMATION ACTIVITIES

42. For the Fourth World Conference, including its preparations, to succeed in attracting world attention and in creating a positive political climate, a comprehensive public information programme must be initiated early. In addition to focusing the existing women-related information activities on the Fourth World Conference such as the publication Women 2000 prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women, the weekly radio programmes on women, and the United Nations Focus series of feature articles, other activities are recommended. It is suggested that a new bulletin, entitled "Conference 95", be issued twice a year by the Fourth World Conference secretariat to disseminate information on preparatory activities at all levels in all official languages, which would require additional resources.

43. For the Fourth World Conference to be presented more visually, a logo should be devised as soon as possible. It is presumed that the logo will include the symbol of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, 1976-1985, the commercial use of which requires the conclusion of a licensing agreement with the United Nations Development Fund for Women. Posters should also be designed and national competitions are suggested.

44. The Department of Public Information has been requested by the inter-agency consultation that met in December to prepare a public information strategy, which will be discussed by the sixteenth ad hoc inter-agency meeting on women, to be held in March 1992, with a view to making it available to the Commission at its thirty-sixth session. In the framework of proposals already available, activities would include a pre-conference brochure, an information kit, a documentary film/video and an educational film/video, all in the six official languages. Also envisaged are special supplements to Development Forum and UN Chronicle, as well as radio feature documentaries, radio spots in indigenous languages and reports for the television magazine "United Nations in Action". Efforts will be made through the United Nations information centres to ensure that printed and audiovisual material is reproduced in local languages. Journalists' round tables may be organized in conjunction with each of the five regional preparatory meetings, as well as a pre-Conference journalists' encounter in 1995.

45. Activities envisaged by the Department of Public Information that would depend on the receipt of extrabudgetary resources include: a photo exhibit and poster display sets taken from it; a hologram design for sales items such as buttons and T-shirts; and a series of co-produced television films on specific issues.

46. Public information activities should be undertaken at the national level. It is anticipated that information will be provided in local languages through the United Nations information centres. Local media should be utilized, and voluntary news services, the feminist press and other media channels mobilized.

47. Support should be extended to organizers of special events, such as festivals of music by women composers and musicians, films made by women, exhibitions by women artists, which would contribute to attracting attention to the issue and to the Fourth World Conference. Such activities should also be made known to the Fourth World Conference secretariat so that they can be given further publicity.

## IV. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

### A. Organization of the Fourth World Conference

#### 1. Venue

48. In its resolution 45/129, the General Assembly took note of the invitation extended by the Government of Austria to host the Fourth World Conference in 1995 at Vienna and requested the Commission, as the preparatory body for the Conference, to decide on the venue of the Conference, not later than 1992, bearing in mind that preference should be given to those regions that had not hosted a world conference on women. At its thirty-fifth session, the Commission took note of the offer made by China to host the world conference in 1995, including a forum for non-governmental organizations. All the members of the Group of 77 expressed their support for the invitation extended by China to host the Fourth World Conference. In its decision 35/102, the Commission agreed to make known its decision during its thirty-sixth session. The General Assembly, in its resolution 46/98, again requested the Commission to decide on the venue of the Fourth World Conference not later than at the thirty-sixth session of the Commission, in accordance with Commission decision 35/102.

## 2. Dates

49. The dates of the Fourth World Conference should be scheduled in consultation with the host country as soon as possible after the venue of the Fourth World Conference has been determined, so that publicity and information activities can be started, together with logistical planning. As 1995 will also mark the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the Fourth World Conference should be scheduled with this in mind so as not to coincide with other events. Also, bearing in mind that the Commission will hold its thirty-ninth session in March 1995, it is suggested that early September, prior to the opening of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, would be an appropriate time to hold the Fourth World Conference.

## 3. Duration

50. In an effort to ensure that the Fourth World Conference be held "at the lowest possible cost", in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/77, it was originally proposed that the Fourth World Conference be of five days' duration only. By comparison, previous world conferences on women have been held for at least 10 working days, as will forthcoming world conferences in other sectors. It should be noted that, when the original estimates were made, it was assumed that the Fourth World Conference would concentrate on monitoring and accelerating a steady process of change, rather than having to deal with complex and emerging issues and a situation where, in some respects, the prospects for change had diminished.

51. In calculating conference servicing costs for budgetary purposes, it was assumed that conference servicing would be provided for two plenary meetings a day as well as two other simultaneous committees, each with two meetings a day. This would mean that the amount of time available for statements as well as for the negotiation of texts would be shorter than in any other United Nations conference dealing with as comprehensive and complex a subject. If the Commission were to endorse a five-day Conference, it should be aware that, on the basis of past experience, this would allow a maximum of one intervention of less than five minutes per delegation in plenary. It would also mean that in order to participate fully, each delegation would have to have a minimum of three members.

52. Given the importance of the Fourth World Conference, the Commission may wish to consider whether the short duration originally foreseen would permit a smooth and successful meeting with full participation.

## 4. Rules of procedure

53. The Secretariat will prepare draft rules of procedure based on the practice followed at recent United Nations conferences.

## 5. Agenda

54. It is recommended that the agenda for the Fourth World Conference should be established at an early stage so as to permit an orderly preparation. As a minimum, it should include the quinquennial review and appraisal of the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies and the adoption of the draft platform for action, as suggested above.

### 6. Participation

55. It is recommended that participation should be as wide as possible. Invitations should therefore be extended to:

(a) All States;

(b) Representatives of all organizations that have received a standing invitation from the General Assembly to participate in the sessions and the work of all international conferences convened under its auspices in the capacity of observers to participate in the Fourth World Conference in that capacity, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 3237 (XXIX) and 43/177;

(c) Representatives of the national liberation movements recognized in its region by the Organization of African Unity to participate in the Fourth World Conference in the capacity of observers, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3280 (XXIX);

(d) The specialized agencies, and the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as interested organizations of the United Nations system;

(e) Other interested intergovernmental organizations to be represented by observers at the Fourth World Conference;

(f) Interested non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, to be represented by observers at the Fourth World Conference;

(g) Experts and professional associations, to be represented by observers at the Fourth World Conference.

## B. Secretariat of the Fourth World Conference

56. In its resolution 45/129, the General Assembly requested the Commission to ask the Secretary-General to appoint not later than 1992 the Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference. The Commission took no action at its thirty-fifth session. Subsequently, in its resolution 46/98 the Assembly itself requested the Secretary-General to appoint by 1992 the Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference.

57. The General Assembly in its resolution 35/10 C decided, inter alia, that "the secretariats for special conferences should, to the extent possible, be provided by the existing Secretariat machinery with such temporary strengthening as may be required". The Division for the Advancement of Women, being the secretariat of the Commission and acting as the preparatory body for the Fourth World Conference, will therefore constitute the Fourth World Conference secretariat. In calculating the level of temporary strengthening required, it was assumed that some of the substantive preparatory work would be covered under the existing work programme of the Division, bearing in mind that it would not be possible to undertake any additional work not already included in the regular programme before 1995.

## V. RESOURCES FOR THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE AND ITS PREPARATIONS

58. Assuming that the Fourth World Conference would be held at the "lowest possible cost" and that, to the extent possible, activities would be based on those already programmed in the regular programmes of the secretariat units concerned, Conference servicing requirements were estimated on the basis of a five-day meeting. Apart from conference servicing costs, additional non-recurrent resources in the amount of $US 546,700 have been provided under section 21 of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 for substantive preparation of the Conference to supplement the existing resources of the Division for the Advancement of Women. Moreover, a Trust Fund for the Preparatory Activities for the 1995 World Conference on Women has been established to supplement the regular budgetary resources. It is estimated that resources in the amount of $US 200,000 will be contributed to this trust fund by the donor community during the biennium and utilized for this purpose.

59. The resources for the substantive preparation and holding of the Fourth World Conference during the biennium 1994-1995 have been estimated on a provisional basis at $US 1,110,900, including additional staff and operational requirements for the Centre, and reported to the General Assembly in the context of the revised estimates resulting from resolutions of the Economic and Social Council at its first and second regular sessions, 1990 (A/C.5/45/31, annex). These requirements will be dealt with in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995.

60. A maximum use of resources can be achieved by coordination between the organizations concerned. For this reason, meetings have already taken place between the representatives of the Fourth World Conference secretariat, the regional commissions and the Department of Public Information.

61. Many of the proposed preparatory activities are intended to reinforce national efforts and are, therefore, closely related to development assistance. Others are designed to provide an opportunity for Governments and non-governmental organizations to reflect on the relationship between global changes and advancement of women, a subject with which the Fourth World Conference will have to deal.

62. The information provided in the following paragraphs is intended to give the Commission a general overview of the resources available for the Fourth World Conference on the basis of the original assumptions, and some factors that might be taken into account in assessing possible additional activities. In the event that the Commission makes proposals on any of these matters, a statement of programme budget implications would be submitted to it in accordance with rule 28 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council before a decision is taken.

63. The General Assembly, in its resolution 46/98, expressed concern that the resources available to the programme on advancement of women of the United Nations Secretariat were insufficient to ensure adequate support to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and effective implementation of other aspects of the programme, especially the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women. The Assembly requested its Fifth Committee, in reviewing the programme on advancement of women contained in the proposed programme budget of the Secretary-General, to examine those proposals to ensure that established staffing levels, temporary assistance and other

objects of expenditure were sufficient to ensure adequate support to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and effective implementation of other aspects of the programme, especially the preparations for the Fourth World Conference. The Assembly also requested the Fifth Committee to determine the appropriate resource levels if the proposed resources were found insufficient. After that examination, in its resolution on the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, the Assembly stressed the importance of the preparation of the Fourth World Conference and requested the Secretary-General to ensure that adequate resources were provided for such preparation during the biennium 1992-1993.

64. It has been planned that the bulk of the staff resources for the Fourth World Conference would be drawn from the existing programmes by orienting work in the approved programme budget to the Fourth World Conference. The Division for the Advancement of Women, the Fourth World Conference secretariat, consists of 12 Professional and 7 General Service staff financed from the regular budget, plus two junior Professional and up to four General Service staff financed from extrabudgetary sources. The regional commissions have staff assigned to women's units or focal point functions, the number of which varies by region. The Department of Public Information has one Professional staff member in New York assigned full-time to women's issues.

65. Temporary strengthening has been provided in the 1992-1993 programme budget for the Division for the Advancement of Women, comprising 42 work-months at the Professional level and 30 work-months at the General Service level. No strengthening has been envisaged for the regional commissions or for the Department of Public Information.

66. Provision has been made in the 1992-1993 programme budget of the Division for the Advancement of Women for holding two expert group meetings on priority themes, each comprising 8-10 experts, the same level of funding as was provided in 1990-1991. Provision has been made in the programmes of some regional commissions for holding some seminars and expert group meetings. Consultant resources have been allocated for the preparation of the priority themes at the same level as in the biennium 1990-1991.

67. Resources for travel of staff under the regular budget for the biennium 1992-1993 primarily cover travel to service the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in New York, the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and preparatory activities for the Conference. Total provision for the purpose amount to $US 122,100, including a resource growth in the amount of $US 25,800 against the biennium 1990-1991 which is specifically earmarked for the preparatory activities.

68. In addition, the regular programme of the Division for the Advancement of Women provides for the preparation of reports to the Commission, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, for two expert group meetings per biennium in connection with the preparation of the priority themes for the Commission, the publication of five issues a year of Women 2000, annual updates of the Directory of National Machinery for the Advancement of Women and the Listing of Focal Points within the United Nations System on Questions Relating to Women.

69. The regular programme of the Department of Public Information provides for some public information activities related to the advancement of women,

including Conference preparations. This includes inter alia, a feature series on women in the "United Nations in Focus", a special stamp to be issued by the United Nations Postal Administration, a leaflet targeted at students, a supplement to Development Forum and to UN Chronicle, issues for the television panel discussion programme "World Chronicle" in English and annual briefings of non-governmental organizations.

70. In the previous world conferences on women, many of the preparatory activities were supported from extrabudgetary resources. As indicated in paragraph 58 above, contributions of up to $US 200,000 are expected to be received and utilized towards the preparation of the Fourth World Conference during the current biennium. Bearing in mind the need to conduct a number of preparatory activities that have not been envisaged for funding from the regular budget, that contribution is clearly insufficient to meet the requirements of the preparatory process. Among the activities to be undertaken during the biennium for which regular budget funding is not secured at this stage are the remaining expert group meetings scheduled for 1993 and various regional activities that were intended to meet regional objectives relating to the advancement of women. Resources are also required for the conference-servicing of the interregional consultation on women in public life, to be rescheduled for 1993. The interregional consultation would form part of the preparations for the Fourth World Conference. The existing mandate for the interregional consultation calls for its financing through voluntary and other contributions. In addition to plenary meetings, the convening of a committee of the whole is required to allow discussion of a declaration or resolution to be adopted by the meeting. Finally, it is felt that interregional and regional preparatory activities should be used as a vehicle for promoting the objectives of the Fourth World Conference. Accordingly, a number of information activities on the part of both the Centre and the Department of Public Information, including the production of the bulletin on the Fourth World Conference, information kits, posters, brochures and videos, as well as the holding of press conferences, briefings and round-table discussions for the mass media and the general public, are considered desirable. All these activities were not initially envisaged in the context of preparatory activities and are currently outside the funding from the regular budget. Only staff resources are available for that purpose. Bearing in mind the requirements outlined above, a prompt and generous response to the Trust Fund for the Preparatory Activities for the 1995 World Conference on Women by the donor community is desirable.

71. For major conferences in the past, efforts were made to facilitate the participation of developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in those conferences, including the preparatory stages, by providing voluntary contributions for the travel of representatives of those countries to the meetings. It is proposed to establish the same arrangements with regard to the Fourth World Conference. Should this proposal be acceptable, the Secretary-General would establish a trust fund for the purpose of financing related costs from voluntary contributions of member States. Those costs could relate to the travel of an average of 30 representatives of least developed countries to the appropriate regional preparatory activities and of some 55 representatives of those countries to the interregional consultation and the Fourth World Conference itself. The relating requirements for the current biennium are estimated at $US 800,000.

## VI. SUMMARY OF ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE COMMISSION AT ITS CURRENT SESSION

72. On the basis of existing mandates, the Commission at its thirty-sixth session is expected to take the following actions:

(a) To decide on the venue of the Fourth World Conference;

(b) To make a recommendation regarding the rescheduling of the inter-regional consultation on women in public life and its place in the preparatory process.

73. In addition, on the basis of recommendations from the Secretariat, the Commission may wish to make recommendations regarding:

(a) The duration of the Fourth World Conference;

(b) The activities necessary for the preparations and holding of the Fourth World Conference, including arrangements for extrabudgetary resources for that purpose;

(c) National preparations, such as the creation of national committees and the holding of national appraisal meetings;

(d) Preparation of an information campaign to publicize the Fourth World Conference and its preparations;

(e) The role of non-governmental organizations in the preparations for the Fourth World Conference, including regional forums and a global non-governmental organization forum to be held concurrently with the Fourth World Conference.

### Notes

1/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

2/ See United Nations publication, Sales No. E.89.IV.2.

3/ See United Nations publication, Sales No. E.90.VIII.30.